773 intervention of any kind, they gave birth after drinking water in which Faro had secretly mixed tomato juice. They offered thanks by giving him three or four tomatoes, depending upon the sex of the child.

After the women, the men, too, gave up worshiping the tree. Instead of seeking wood elsewhere, as they had been in the habit of doing, they began to burn the twigs that fell under the balanza in order to maintain their fire, the fire it had given them.

The tree cursed them. They were thus preyed upon by illness and bad feelings: vindictiveness, hatred, jealousy. The wounds they /23/ inflicted upon themselves in order to give blood and regain their youth no longer healed and became infected.

773 825 A few among them tried to remedy this new state of affairs. Eight of the eldest men went up to the balanza and, in spite of the heat it gave off in order to repel them, they made incisions on their tongues and offered it their blood. The tree was surprised and first gave out a sort of sigh, for it appreciated the sacrifice. Finally it spoke to them and announced the coming of death. But because of their submission and the sacrifice they had consented to, it transformed them into birds, tatugu kononi (literally: little birds of fire). In order to accomplish this, it demanded that they rub their backs against the tree trunk until all their blood was gone. The men cried out in pain in the process, but just as they were about to die, their souls were transformed into birds. Their flesh and skin penetrated into the tree; their bones mingled with the white bark and the marrow became the red fruit which, from that day on, ripened on the tree. Since that time, the "human flesh" which is the wood of the balanza is rarely put to profane use. These first eight elders transformed into birds were subsequently venerated by men (1).

[326]

1. In particular by all blacksmiths. Since their transformation the birds tatugu kononi supposedly live near the balanza and respect a certain number of taboos: they must not separate but must live communally outside of villages. They are responsible for fire; though incapable of lighting it, they have the power, by their very presence, to keep it up or to put it out. A twig of damp

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straw bursts into flames when one lights it while pronouncing their name. They also protect woman potters against burns. They are considered impure because of the earth in which they dig holes and because of the fire which is itself impure.

773 As the tree blossomed and bore fruit, the sacrifices, of which it was still the object, increased its yield: leaves and fruit contained the blood of men. The latter began to eat the fruit for it was appetizing and sweet. They also cut branches to feed their animals. The tree remained silent.

But soon men took advantage of it. One man climbed to its summit, cut off all its buds, and carried them away. Those who came afterwards were terrified to find the tree mutilated. The culprit was terrified by his own action and ran away to Mandé, but there the avenging force (nyama) that pursued him caught up with him and he dropped dead.

The people of Mandé, not knowing that they had broken a taboo and being ignorant of death, sheltered him, thinking he was asleep. They tried to feed him and rubbed the corpse with sorrel and oil. Thanks to these ministrations the body /24/ kept for a certain time, but at the end of ten days, it rotted. The force (nyama) it exuded attacked other men who in turn also died.

The deceased's parents came to fetch the body. They ate the flesh because since the arrival of death, the thunder stones that fell from the sky no longer contained karite nuts and they were beginning to starve. They carried away the dead man's bones.

When they returned to the tree, it ordered them to grind the bones and rub its mutilated branches with powder. It told them that from then on it would be useless to give it their blood; they would no longer be rejuvenated and they would all know death.

At the sound of these words, three men fell; four women who unexpectedly came by suffered the same fate. The seven corpses rotted around the tree that had taken their lives. This was the last sacrifice.

The tree announced that it was forsaking men but that it would continue to give the red fruit representing their blood poured over him in the past. And since then, the tree follows an annual cycle contrary to that of other plants: during the winter season it loses its

773 Empty space, or tyema, which separates the sky from the earth, remains under the domination of Téliko. It is the domain of air, the winds and insects.

773 823 The earth is divided into seven parts which correspond to the seven heavens and are as follows: (1) dugukolo, earth; (2) dugukolo fi, black earth; (3) dugukolo dye, white earth; (4) dugukolo mana, shedding of the earth; (5) dugukolo bele, "stone of the earth"; (6) dugukolo noro, soft earth; (7) dugukolo wolofla, the seventh earth.

On earth, Faro first created deep watery holes, the abysses of the sea and the rivers which he haunts. He himself dug the first well, the ponds, and the bed of torrents. He established the schedule of the rains which fall from the seventh part of heaven to the seventh part of the earth and constitute the purification and reparation of cosmic disorders.

773 825 824 He then classified living beings. In the east, wild and domestic animals, each group headed respectively by the lion and the horse; in the west, the birds; in the north, the fish with the miri (1) at their

1. Micralestes acutidens.

head, the sauria, and the batrachia; in the south, all plant life which he divided into three categories (2), indicating the purifying and

2. These are respectively: herbs, bin, headed by the narakata (Digitaria digitata); plants, fura, the first being the sindya (Cassia siberiana), and trees, dyiri, divided into three categories headed respectively by the karite, the baobab, and the nere (Parkia biglobosa).

medicinal power of each.

773 Men were also named and classified and the races distributed according to the quality of the blood into which Faro inscribed the destiny of each. He determined the castes, beginning with the slaves.

He then decided each one's foods and, to protect /30/ the species from destruction, he indicated the forbidden foods, animal and vegetable, which each category of beings had to respect.

The following day, in order to give thanks to Faro, the villagers went to the edge of the well to the sound of drums and sacrificed the animal. The water swelled, seethed up, and formed a streat which still runs into the Niger today.

The composition of Faro's body determines the behavior of men in the rituals performedin his honor. While the usual offerings of blood, tomatoes, raw cereal mash, and baked cakes are consumed by him and returned to the givers in the shape of material possessions (children, millet, rain) or spiritual possessions (preservation of the souls of the living and the dead), the choice content of the offerings or sacrifices, the albino and copper, are reserved only for him and help increase his strength and stimulate his action. /44/ He absorbs them for his own sake; thus it is said that: "copper and albino are the sacrificial privileges of Faro."

Manifestations of Faro

All the atmospheric manifestations in the sky are evidence of Faro's presence and power. Rain, thunder, squalls, hail, and the rainbow all demonstrate his action. The lightning that bursts forth in the koblenkaba is a weapon, a small axe (sempere ni or dyele dɛ̃ ɲini) which he throws from the top of the sky. If lightning strikes, it is a proof of his revenge. In the tree, the lightning hits the gecko (ala ɲugu), an evil animal which, when it lives in homes near the hearth, supposedly stirs up fires of conflagration. When lightning strikes men, it is in punishment for the breaking of a taboo. The stone axes, found at the point where lightning strikes, are collected and kept in the sanctuaries of the rain altars, to be used in case of drought or in the course of seasonal rites. They are also placed in the seeded fields, so that their strength, by communicating itself to the seed, may be beneficial to germination.

On earth, Faro is conceived of as a unique being whose principal home is the Niger; he is present everywhere. In practice, the Bambara believe that a spirit haunts each torrent, pond, or well, each gourd of water, each dewdrop; they call him dyi tigi, "master of water."

The second, dyi ble "red water," is Faro's copper, a reflection of koblenkaba or "red sky." It is similarly the seat of the spirit's warlike or punitive activities. Water of wrath and vengeful action, it drowns the guilty. Through it, Faro strikes the bodies and health of those who do not recognize his dominion.

Faro prefers to sojourn in the dyi fi, "black water," where he keeps his secrets. It is to this water that one prays to seek grace. It is from the dyi fi that the twelve future waters will flow.

Calm and felicity reign in the dyi sumane, "cold water," where the fish live. The dya of earthly bwings are preserved in it.

While Faro drowns those he punishes in the dyi ble, it is in the madũ (literally, person, to eat) that their bodies rot or become the prey of fish.

The sixth category of water, kosira (literally, thing of fear) is a jail. In it Faro temporarily places all that comes under his domination.

The seventh water, dyi wolõflã, corresponds to the seventh heaven.

In the Niger, the places inhabited by Faro bear the general name of faro tyin. These are mostly deep depressions, well known to the shore dwellers, particularly the Bozo. /46/ Sometimes a consecrated stone, placed on the shore, receives the sacrifices offered to the spirit.

The most celebrated is a place called Souko, located upstream from Koulikoro near the village of Kayo. The local spirit engendered all that now lives in the river. Because of this he is worshipped by all Bozo and Somono fishermen, who used to send delegations to the annual sacrifice that took place during the dry season.

The Faro of Ségou lives in the Faka, a deep hole located close to the right bank, facing the town. Legend has it that the Faka is extended by tunnels: one links the river to the Bani while the other opens out at Dya and was used by the founders of the settlement in mythical times.

The Faka is placed under the guardianship of a crocodile to which each year the inhabitants offered victims. At the bottom of the hole there is a fat blind scaleless polyo, which the fishermen always return to the water if they catch it in their nets "because it is Faro's gate-keeper." In olden times, a flat stone upon which were traced a representation of Faro and black dots equal in number to the inhabitants of Ségou was visible in the deepest part of the waters. On this occasion an albino was sacrificed (by slitting his throat) and the first fruits of the harvest were offered to the spirit.

776 823 782 On market day, a gourd filled with river water, called fle ndinye faro, is placed close to the shore where the canoes land. To drink a mouthful of this water is equivalent to a sacrifice to the spirit. The drinker gives a cowrie as alms to the beggar who drew the water, for "never can [Faro's] water be bought or sold" (1).

1. Ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã.
See pl. II, b.

At Sama, the faro tyin is a kind of natural corridor located amidst the rocks bordering and overhanging the left bank of the river.

[825] The finches nesting there warn the boatmen of the place's sanctity by flying off; the boatmen then stop to pray. In passing, they throw an offering and those who have broken taboos purify themselves by washing. Each shows the spirit all that he carries with him. Two nearby trees, faro sõndyiri or "trees of Faro's sacrifice," are used to tie up the white bulls at twilight. The following day, they are thrown alive into the river with millet mash and cola nuts. At the bottom of the passage, on a fairly smooth surface, the image of Faro described above was drawn each year in the course of the ceremony celebrated by the society of the Komo.

/47/ Faro also haunts ponds and wells. In the village of Nango a natural well was revealed to a hunter by a white ram which appeared out of a thicket. The village was built after the discovery of the water hole where the inhabitants now worship the spirit.

In the village of Siyango, the water of the well in which Faro resides is tabooed, the site of the well being the seat of all the religious ceremonies of the villagers. There the newborn are presented, and deaths and marriages announced. The sick are treated by being [756] made to drink the well water and wash in it. From his herd, each person offers every year an animal which is thrown alive into the pit. [681] Finally, those condemned to death are executed by drowning in the same spot.

Faro's Auxiliaries

776 773 Faro has placed spirits as his representatives in the skies, in space, on earth, in the trees, and in the rocks of the mountains. They see

776 to it that all things proceed in good order. In addition he is accom-
773 panied by auxiliaries who participate in his work.

The most important of these is his "secretary," the bolokuruni, a blacksmith of the black race who had lost the use of his hands and who went to live with Faro after his crippling.

This blacksmith lived on earth at a time when craftsmen did not know the use of tongs and used to seize the red iron in their bare hands to carry it to the anvil. The man who was to become Faro's companion had reached an advanced age and was still practicing his art when one day both his wrists were broken by the hammer of a clumsy apprentice. Mad with pain, he ran to the river and threw himself in to ease his suffering. Seeing that in his grief the man had turned to him, Faro took pity on him and kept him at his side. His body was never found and a diviner told his family the happy event of his disappearance.

The bolokuruni accompanies Faro and assists him in his incessant labor. He is the one who consults the register in Faro's fins in which everything is inscribed. "The requested image is sent from the fins into the pupil of Faro's eye which the blacksmith watches." As this image is reflected in the servitor's eye, he uses it according to the orders he receives. Thus he verifies daily the count of those living and dead.

776 /48/ The spirit has numerous auxiliaries among the animals. His
825 airborne messenger is the swallow. It never rests upon the impure earth and its wings, reproduced on the headdress of the old men, symbolize the words it carries. The scorpion's stinger is the weapon given by Faro to the original twins: whoever attacks or wounds a twin is stung by this insect. The crocodile is the executor of Faro's important works: it kills those guilty of breaking taboos, or chases undesirables away from the river's edge. The scaleless fish, called kokoni, directed the first streaming of the waters on earth (1). The

1. See p. 33.

tneni (2) is Faro's "ordure" which it is the duty of someone to sweep

2. Alestes nigrilineatus.

776 825 up (1). The small miri (2), "mother of fish," is regarded as the

1. The ordure has its use in religious life. See p. 258.

2. Micralestes acutidens.

creator and guardian of all fish. Its name is associated with all prayers that are recited on the waters. The dodo (3) is Faro's messenger in

3. Tétrodon fahaka.

the waters and transmits his orders and directives, and the polyo (4)

4. The polyo fi is Herterobranchus longifilis; the polyo ble is Heterobranchus bidorsalis.

is the gatekeeper, controlling those who wish to penetrate into the spirit's domain.

776 824 Certain plants are in constant communication with him. The yayale (5), "Faro's grass," grew on the mound where the mythical twins

5. Andropogon (Hyparrhenia) hirtus.

were born. The tomato, ngoyo (6), is assimilated in the blood. It

6. Lycopersicum cerasiforme, the native tomato (pl. II, a).

carries within it the potential embryo for its seeds are multiples of seven, the number of duality. It is by means of the tomato that Faro impregnates women for it possesses, like humans and animals, a ni and a dya. When it has a double bloom, the two twin tomatoes are given to the women so that they may bear twins. If the fruit is single on the stem, it is split in two to be cooked and eaten. The gesture of splitting separates it symbolically from its dya which is thus returned to Faro (7).

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D. Traore. "Le Tere chez les Bambara du Ségou /The Tere among the Bambara of Ségou/," Notes africaines, January 1947, pp. 29-31.

774 Man is considered the bearer of a strong tere. Because he talks, is well informed, and knows good from evil, he is responsible for his own life and that of his family. The tere is the gaining of consciousness.

774 This aspect of the tere means that only domestic animals, whose life depends on man, are bearers of this principle. Wild animals
825 "have a hard and barren life; they have to labor to feed themselves; so they do not have to bear the burden of a tere." All that lives independently of man is without a tere. (1)

1. However, according to certain informants, wild animals might also be endowed with several tere for different parts of the body. In this case, it would seem that the term designates especially the animal's physical peculiarities and not its consciousness, as in the case of man and domestic animals.

The tere of domestic animals is not as powerful as that of man, but is also revealed by external signs. For instance, a horse that swings its head from right to left while it is tied up has a very bad tere; it is said to be its duga fufa (2). Such a beast is undesirable in

2. Literally, "the swaying of the hawk." It is said that when a hawk descends on its prey, it swings its head right and left in order to see the prey better.

a home for it "chases away happiness and success." A wounded domestic animal attacks its enemy with its tere.

774 The fact that the tere is that part of the person which suffers the
784 consequences of impurity testifies to the bonds that unite man to the
827 outer world. The tere is disturbed when a taboo, tne, is broken. If it is a good tere, it leaves the person; if it is a bad one, it becomes worse. On the other hand, the breaking of a taboo provokes a physiological change in the blood which loses its red color and becomes

845 Up to the time they are twelve, the children bathe themselves preferably in the Niger. They supposedly can walk on water and never run the risk of drowning.

The twins do not become separated from each other any more than the dya is separated from the living being to which it is attached. They wear the same clothes and eat the same food simultaneously. Formerly male twins married the same woman. If one of them dies 845 at an early age, the blacksmith carves a small wooden doll called 778 flanitokele, which takes the name of the deceased and which the mother puts on the mat next to the living child. The latter takes this doll with him at the time of his circumcision and keeps it during the period of his seclusion in order to bring it back to the parental home whence it is never removed. When he marries, he sticks the doll into the earth along with another piece of wood symbolizing the wife of the deceased. Since twins are in a sense a living replica of Faro, none can bother them without showing disrespect to him. On the other hand, they are the object of attention and precaution on the part of their family as well as their neighbors. Their presence is always beneficial. Considered invulnerable, twins used to march ahead of [728] troops in times of war and would serve as inviolable intermediaries between the warring parties during truce.

The Hermaphrodite

826 The hermaphrodite, being both male and female, is to all extent and purpose his own twin. Consequently, he has no dya (1).

1. The hyena is considered a hermaphrodite; it can engender or conceive, depending on its size and strength, "the stronger impregnating the weaker." A tattooing system is based upon this belief.

[825 304]

/88/ The Albino

[143] Albinos of light or reddish skin and red hair are called gombele or yepege, this latter term being reserved for those who show the most accentuated characteristics.

826 The albino is supposedly born of sexual relations which took place 833 in the middle of the day when the sun is in the koblenkaba, sky of

TT3 evolution. They also indicate different stages in the development of the forms. These may be observed in certain museums of arts and crafts which, in some villages, are the sanctuaries where ancestral material is kept. Finally, in numerous ceremonies and in the education of the young, they constitute precious milestones in the history of the Bambara people.

Fishing and Hunting

TT3 226 According to tradition, the fishing net was the first instrument of technology taught men, and fish constituted the primeval food.

"One day, four women went to the shore of the Niger to collect sand which they used for bedding and which also served as food since they no longer received any from the sky. As they advanced, the sand drew back so that they soon found themselves very far from their usual stopping place. They /101/ then wished to return, but Faro prevented them from doing so and asked them to work for him, promising them a precious gift in return. They "swept up the spirit's excrements" for seven days; on the eighth day, "the words began with Faro." He showed them two fishing nets, dyo, and explained to them their manufacture and use. One had very fine loops, dyonyemise (literally, net of the thin eyes), and the other larger loops, dyonyekumba (literally, net with big eyes). Both were made of the fiber of the nyama tree. The first was reserved for tneni (1) fishing, called

• 825

1. Alestes nigrinileatus.

"Faro's excrements," and the second for the capture of larger fish such as sheatfish, gurnard, and catfish.

"For seven days the women were taught by the spirit and his captive; on the eighth day they were liberated. Seven days after these events they began to fish and to nourish themselves with fish.

"But they soon abused the gift they had received. Taking turns day and night, and fishing without interruption at the very place of the revelation, they taxed the spirit's patience. The latter appeared to them above the water, holding his girl twins in his arms; he complained of their harshness, their stupidity, and the weariness they caused him. Reclaiming the secret he had given them, he indicated to them that fishing would hereafter be a man's job and that they would only have the right to sell the fish.

787 which the god speaks. In the brotherhoods of which we shall presently speak, the wara-mina-den' is, as the term indicates, "possessed by the god"; he is also said to be "the mouth of the god" (wara da). However, the diviner can speak only unin- [198] telligible gibberish during trance, and so this half-human, half-divine language must be interpreted by the wara-tigi or high-priest.

During dream or divine possession, the invisible is brought within man's reach by a sort of inner illumination; both methods may be said to be intuitive divination. Other methods, even more widely used, are based on a different procedure. These methods purport to penetrate the divine intention and will by observation of external signs. How do these signs differ from natural phenomena?

The native pays very little attention to what we call [811] natural laws. He reasons by analogy and attributes any unfamiliar phenomenon to an invisible being endowed like himself with intelligence and will. The indications of this will are not precise, and it is up to each person to recognize and to interpret them. Divination based on external signs may be called deductive. The signs may be classified in two categories: those involving living beings and those involving inanimate objects.

787 Living beings. Theoretically, any animal is useful for purposes of observation because its actions, whose determining 825 cause is unknown to the ordinary man, reveal to the seer the divine will or intervention.

Observations of this kind have given rise to many taboos (tne). Here is an example: while crossing a [135] stream an ancestor of the Samaké was caught by a crocodile and carried down through the water to the creature's lair, where he was abandoned. It happened that the man was merely stunned and when he came to, he pondered how he might escape. Suddenly he felt some grains of sand fall on his face and, seeking the source, noticed that a thread of light came in through a tiny fissure in the rock. The grains of sand were coming through this crack, and he realized that an ant lion (gere) was throwing them in an effort to show him how to get out; so he managed to enlarge the crack enough to escape. But, remembering the insect to

564 Every blacksmith is regarded as the holder of an excellent tere.
326 He is well-intentioned, affable, and never hurts anyone. It is easy
774 to make friends with him, to joke with him, even if one knows him but a short time. The senankuya relationships which he has with other Blacks also contribute to the cordiality of these ties.

[304] The good tere of the blacksmith is brought into play particularly at circumcision which is preferably entrusted to a Gwonna. Being circumcised by a blacksmith causes the wanzo to diminish rapidly, hastens the healing, and improves the tere. A blacksmith is reputed to have the power of transforming himself at will into an animal or a plant. In those places where hyenas are venerated as the animal [825] protectors of a village (dasiri), they are always considered as the blacksmith's ancestors who have undergone metamorphosis. (1).

1. Particularly in the village of Konodimi, situated 21 km. to the southwest of Ségou.

773 The ritual paraphernalia now preserved in each village comprise
564 models of all the tools manufactured by the blacksmiths since their
326 first appearance.
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a. Wooden tools The craftsmen first used wood, gradually changing the shape of the objects. From a simple stick /116/ (generally in sunzun) (2) or from a rough-hewn block, they gradually made more

2. Diospyros mespiliformis. The wood of this tree is very hard.

perfect tools, obtaining the shape desired by rubbing and polishing on rocks.

773 The first weapon used in hunting was a throwing instrument in the
564 shape of a boar-spear, the semenkala (from kala, handle, Fig. 9, A).
326 Hewn from one piece, it comprised three distinct parts: (1) the
411 bulonda; (2) the semenu; and (3) the koli (literally, hook). Men threw the object with all their strength at the pursued animal or else they dug into the earth where their prey was hiding with the pointed end (semena) which was often poisoned with a viper's venom. The weapon was the object of blood sacrifices carried out on the koli and destined to increase its strength.

794 776 778 [563]

In some villages, the sacrificer never consumes butter or milk, foods which the Peul furnish the Bambara.

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

794 776 825 The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the place.

The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds. It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot [582 626] rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer tolerated in his native village (1).

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

794 776 782 As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective), of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings (cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

794 778 852 When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are, by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented to all the allies senânku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom they proceed to joke.

794 On the following night, the future initiates are led into the bush to a place called biri yoro (literally, place of initiation), where they sit down upon the ground, their heads covered with a piece of cloth.

At a sign from the dyolokotigi, a member causes the ritual instruments to roar or sing in succession; then he hides them and the postulants must find them. As they are not able to do so, a series of hazings are inflicted upon them (1) after which they are shown the

1. These hazings are often severe; fun is made of the ignorance and fears of the postulant.

instruments and each in turn made to repeat the solemn oath:

"If you have heard the dyara of the uncircumcised, that is it. Chisel a piece of wood, make a hole, put a string through, turn it, it is that which is the word of the ndomo dyara. If you reveal it, may it take your heart, may it take your liver, may it kill you" (2).

2. Ni ye me bilakorow ka ndomo dyara, nin do ka djiri dese, ka wo bo o la, ka dyuru ndo o la, o bi fyeku, o de bi ndomo dyara ka fo, ni ya korobo, a ki sɔ̃ ta, a ki biñe ta, a ki fa.

Next, they are made to lick three times the object which is then entrusted to them so that they may learn to use it. The same ritual is performed for each instrument, and the prayer is repeated with only a change in the name.

The young men frequently sacrifice upon the altars of the ndomo. 794 The usual content of the sacrifice is the gray lizard /margouillat/, 782 busa, likened to an uncircumcised boy (its tail representing the 835 foreskin). The victim's wanzo, liberated by death, joins the wanzo contained in the altars and, consequently, that of the members. [262] The animal is then cooked and eaten.

C. Activity of the Society

794 At the time the fields are being cultivated, the members who are called upon to do work take their ritual objects along. The young

IV. Rites for the Renewal of the Year

These rites involve individual, familial, and collective actions; the latter bring into play most of the institutions (1). Everyone, from

1. As examples of collective rites we present those which are performed on the stone altars of the village (fara ba) (see p. 129).

the newborn to the elder, must undergo a kind of purification which consists essentially of the /207/ rejection of the breath and forces of the past year and of the taking in of new breath and forces. It is, according to Bambara expression, " a refreshing of the body and soul. " But the renewal is not limited to elements which make up the person; it extends to the cosmos and the cardinal points.

1. The individual rite of the family chief is performed with the instrument ngoni, which is used to make on the wall of his ceso the drawings representing the universe. (2) He starts out with an offering

2. See p. 172, Fig. 10.

of tomato juice to Faro who presides over the family use of the object and who is present thereafter. The fruits are squeezed; a hedgehog is sacrificed over the juice so that no other spirit may touch it. Next the man sacrifices a gray lizard as a reminder of his own condition before circumcision. This sacrifice represents a new circumcision offered to Faro and increases his strength.

The man who is offering the sacrifice puts his tongue in the juice of the fruit without swallowing a drop in order to give Faro " a complete accounting of all his acts and thoughts during the past year (work, births, deaths, illnesses, quarrels, fortune, and misfortune) just as a subordinate gives an accounting to his superior. " He puts his right little finger in the liquid and places it on the wall over the drawing representing Faro. Then he sucks in a little of the tomato juice through his nostrils and blows it over the ngoni, thus sweeping away the remaining life from the past year which he still had in his body. A new air which comes from Faro then circulates in his lungs. He next fills his mouth with the liquid contained in the male goatskin of the instrument and spits it out immediately to show the spirit that

121

1. Among others J. Toutain, C. R. des Garnered Shelves de J. Frazer /Report on the Garnered Shelves by J. Frazer/.

concerning the absence of historical documents and the difference in periods. To admit these postulates, it is necessary to prove precisely this absence and also the incapability of oral tradition to keep alive the traditions and ways of viewing the world over long periods of time.

In any event, whatever the opinion adopted, it would be good methodology to admit as an immediate hypothesis the probable or possible role played by the Sudanese world as a preserver or transformer of attitudes, rites, and concepts which scholars find everywhere else but which remain unexplained. For in a few years nothing will remain to be either disclaimed or confirmed concerning these systems which are on their way to rapid disintegration. Because of mechanization and an unconscious wish for self destruction the Black civilizations will soon become only a shadow of their former selves and the instability of their material will not allow them to be reconstituted in their complexity and grandeur.

And whatever the fate of this hypothesis, we may find, as a result of such thinking that the religious thought of the Blacks, whether original or not, will take its place in the philosophy of history and in the history of humanity.

/231/ ADDENDA

000 The research conducted in the field during the publishing of the present work has brought to light the following facts which, we believe, it will be useful to present succinctly to the reader.

Chapter 1

776 825 Because of the loss of the seeds in their collarbones, Pemba and Mousso Koroni actually have an animal aspect which they owe to their impurity as well as to that of the uncultivated earth which they symbolize. Pemba is represented by the warableni (Vulpes pallida) and Mousso Koroni by the kongowuluni (unidentified fox). It is this

776 latter animal which is imitated by the vukuri during the children's
825 nocturnal ritual described on page 65.

This new information confirms the observations noted on page 47, footnote 1, concerning the identity of the Bambara and Dogon representations. Moreover, the warableni, like the yurugu (Vulpes pallida) of the Dogon, intervenes in divination, particularly in geomancy. The investigations permit the extension of these representations to Sudanese tribes coming from Mandé (see p. 2), particularly, to the Bozo and the Peul.

Chapter 3

826 All Sudanese peoples originating in Mandé are characterized by the
773 seeds (or fish) contained in their collarbone, these varying from one
824 tribe to another. On the other hand, within a tribe, the theoretical content of the eight seeds, though roughly similar in terminology, differs in arrangement from family to family. Also the positions of the first and last seeds are reversed for men and women. Example: the blacksmiths have as their first seed the keninge and as their last the tikaninkuru, whereas the potters have as their first seed the tikaninkuru which they cultivate in the sacred fields (see p. 170) and as their last the keninge.

Moreover, after Mousso Koroni had stolen from Pemba the seeds he was entrusted to give on earth, Faro, through the intermediary of the /232/ animals who ate them at his order, reclaimed them from her; thus purified, he distributed them to men. The animal, which brought back to Faro the essential seed of each family, becomes the taboo, tne, of the family concerned, and the breaking of this taboo has the basic effect of removing the content of the culprit's collarbone. Analogous representations are noted among the Dogon.

Totemism, the so called "joking relationship" (senankuya of the Bambara), the caste system, and the exogamous laws of the Sudanese are based on the elements and classification of the contents of the collarbone.

Chapter 6

794 All the great adult institutions (dyo) are in contact with the
857 children's society of the Ndomo which reflects the universal organization
772

787 which he owed his life, he vowed that he and his descendants
825 would evermore respect it. That is why the gere is me for all
● the Samaké, the descendants of that ancestor.

Before beginning a fight with Blisi, Bacari Dyan, a Peul, wanted to know the outcome. A marabout told him to get two rams: "Name one Blisi and the other Bacari," he said," and watch them fighting." To be sure, during one of their combats, the ram named Bacari killed the one named Blisi and such, too, was the result of the fight between Bacari Dyan and Blisi.

But although a living animal can show the divine will through its actions, the dead body of one offered in sacrifice is no less informative. It is the duty of the seer or initiate to discover the signs of the divine will from the dying spasms, from the position taken by the body, or from the relative position of the entrails or the general constitution of each animal. This branch of mantic is called extispicy, from which are derived various methods of divination used by the Bambara.

It is common practice to sacrifice a chicken; if it falls on its back, with its feet extended away from the observer, the omens are thought to be unfavorable. If the feet point toward the observer, the omens are good. Any other position is doubtful and, if need be, the sacrifice is repeated until a categorical answer has been obtained.

Often enough a Bambara returning from a long journey wants to learn whether one or another of his wives has been faithful to him. He sacrifices a rooster and, after opening it, examines the scrotum; if it looks normal, the wife has been faithful, but if it shows [136] certain peculiarities, notably a reddish color, her guilt is proved.

787 Inanimate objects. Every Bambara possesses a set of divining cowrie shells. He almost always carries a stated number of shells -- usually 12 -- in a small bag. If he wants to consult the omens -- about the most varied sorts of enterprise -- he takes the cowries in hand and throws them onto the ground from a point not far above the ground. He reads the answer in the general arrangement of the group and also in the position of individual cowries relative to one another. If one cowrie is

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609
821 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

791 Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
326 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
224 start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equipment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well as an arsenal of magic weapons.

825 The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
778 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus; bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an application of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

231 It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
552 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
825 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey" derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat" derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba Meaning "goat."

231 825 meaning "goat." In the case of the goat, there remain some customs that are very suggestive. Its milk is the basis of the most solemn of all oaths, that of fraternization; milk is also used to put out fires started by lightning and the hide is used to make sandals worn by widows during the period of mourning. The chronicle tells us that a certain dish made of a goat's head gives rise to the chief's power and sustains it (1). In spite of all

1. See p. 31, in connection with Dina Wara.

this, the goat shares with the donkey a general scorn and they are considered to be the born companions of slaves. This is perhaps why some people refuse to allow either animal to come into the house. Indeed, it is believed that a rich and powerful man can be ruined if either of these animals enters his house or, even worse, if he touches them.

718 791 754 Magician's work. So it is that man is immersed in a strange fluid. In the final analysis, everything, man included, [149] is merely a manifestation of this fluid. Currents and eddies have all forms of life at their mercy, and only the strongest are able to resist, control and even acquire in the struggle greater power than they would otherwise display. "The one who knows" can avoid or follow this chaotic movement; he can control himself and others. He is the real "master" (soma) and he alone can utilize this ever present and ever powerful invisible world.

754 What makes a magician can be described by a single term: the magic weapon, to be used for defense as well as for attack, and indeed for anything else, by one who knows how to use it. Let us consider some of the examples in the Bambara arsenal.

For anyone who wants to destroy an enemy, the so ma sama (lit., "bundle of the person of the house") is a valuable weapon. It is a mysterious powder, kept in the horn of a hind, in which is placed a small stick. It is used in the following manner: let us suppose that a Bambara wishes to harm a person who is passing through the village. The Bambara secretly takes

754 operator can drop it into the food or drink unobtrusively while serving the victim.

Some of the powders are tossed at the victim with a quick fillip and enter the skin through the tiniest abrasions.

All this is accompanied by the direst curses and constitutes what is known as korti su. These poisons act in various ways, some quickly and others slowly. It is said that the su-mugu only takes effect gradually. Its action is to be seen in a certain amount of swelling of the abdomen, which causes death within a few months. There is not a single native who is not terrified of the korti, and there are Europeans who have experienced the dangerous effects.

Some korti are not the effect of manipulations but rather of true spirits of evil set in motion by magic practices. The following is an example of the type called donna, which includes also the so ma sama and su-mugu. The symbol or material representation (boli) of this donna is a kind of ball, not very large. In order to use it, the operator places it on the blade of one of the native mattocks called daba. The spell is worked at night. The spirit is attracted by the sacrifice of a chicken and offerings of kola. The operator utters his curses against the people -- often far away -- and asks the spirit [151] to undertake vengeance. If the spirit agrees, a sound is heard which resembles the noise made by the flight of a dung bettle (1).

825

1. I have been told that this is the reason for the fear certain Bambara have of this insect.

This is the genie starting off on its mission. He will fatally sting the enemy during sleep and then return, announced by the same noise of flight as was heard on his departure. If the imitator should go to sleep while the spirit is away, he will himself be killed in the same way as the victim. He must stay awake for the spirit's return and again sacrifice chicken and kola to him.

754 The korti are counteracted by the kana, which are de-
755 fensive weapons, more particularly, curative. Based on the same principles and using similar ingredients, they are essentially

311 Bambara seeks the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-
621 siri) or, more exactly, determines where this genie dwells. It
776 may be a spring, a hill, or a rock; often it is a fine tree, in-
794 variably surrounded by a grove or at least with a grove nearby. Then, always following the same procedure, he finds out the conditions under which the genie will allow someone to settle in his domain in order to live there and cultivate the lands. Thus, a contract is worked out which governs the man's exploitation of the genie's territorial domain. As a result, provided he worships the genie in the manner required, the man [228] will be able to work under the protection of the god. Anyone who has had a share in the contract, even if only through representatives, will likewise profit if he scrupulously observes the conditions.

621 The establishment of a village requires the cooperation of
622 several communities, each represented by its fa. One of these fa
793 will either appropriate the leadership or be chosen as the rep-
794 resentative or chief of the others. Sometimes he may be merely primus inter pares; otherwise he may have managed to have his primacy conceded by the rest. It is this chief who treats with the genie in the name of the whole village; thus, he becomes the "high priest of the genie" (nyana-n-son-na-ba) with the essential function of "making the offerings" (son') required by the cult. Furthermore, he administers the earthly domain of the genie and is therefore called dugu-tigi (master of the earth).

To the nyana dugu-da-siri is usually attributed the same dyamu as that of its high priest, just as though the genie belonged to the spiritual family of the priest. This is a result consistent with the mentality of the Bambara.

621 The same mental state accounts for the custom in certain
776 villages of dedicating a living animal, often a ram, to the
778 nyana dugu-da-siri and believing it to be the god's mount. The animal is allowed to wander freely about the village, and its
[825] mischief is never punished; indeed, the people enjoy caressing and indulging it. The animal takes on some of the attributes of the genie and is, as it were, endowed with certain supernatural virtues, so only good can come from contact with it.

621 Theoretically, each settlement has only one genie, but
776 actually it may have several, especially if it has been settled by

794 [292] Some of the clergy use a disguise when officiating in public; furthermore, the ceremonies are held only at night.

[198] Finally, in the presence of the profane, the initiated use a special language for everything referring specifically to the cult. The greatest secret of all is the name of the nyana, [551] because anyone who knows the name has complete power over the spirit it designates.

794 298 From the point of view of the disguised clerical body, this secrecy is virtually impenetrable. A disguised person loses his human personality and is withdrawn from the natural world. It is an accepted fact that it is dangerous for those not affiliated to intercept his glance through the tiny openings in the mask; undoubtedly his person on that occasion is impregnated with a fluid whose emanations are fatal to those who, not being affiliated, are unprotected against them.

Some of these disguises include a headdress or mask and for the body a kind of costume usually made of long strips of vegetal material; is this, as has been suggested, simply a means of dominating the herd of adepts and even more the profane through the terror such regalia inspires when seen at night by the flickering light of torches and bonfires? It seems more probable that one must put this matter on the plane of the supernatural in order to understand it. Dangerous wild animals [825 776] are believed to be incarnations of evil and powerful gods, and an attempt is made to present an outward appearance consistent with the terror merely seeing them inspires, in order thereby to acquire the supernatural qualities that characterize them (1).

1. There is no doubt that some individuals, under the influence of the role of wild beast that they are portraying, have been led to commit actual murders during ritual observances. I have often heard this asserted in connection with the dyara (lion).

794 782 It should be noted that the costume, gestures, [259] dances, songs, and music of the dye-n-fa and their acolytes

The Operation of the Brotherhood

794 A brotherhood is a spiritual family whose internal affairs are conducted like those of a community with natural filiation. The nyana-tigi has the role of fa, and the assemblage of dye-n-fa-u, reinforced by the initiated and the leading believers, serve as the community council. Thus, questions confined to the cult and to administrative matters are dealt with by the nyana-tigi acting alone or with his council, just like the fa in the community. Therefore, the description of the latter's duties which has been given above will suffice to explain by analogy the practices in the brotherhoods. There are, however, certain details peculiar to the brotherhoods, and these will be set forth in what follows.

The Cult

794 The cult is made public during certain ceremonies, of which the two most important are the one at the time of sowing 786 and the other at the time of harvest. It is accepted as fact in the brotherhoods that at planting time the boli copulate so as to produce issue at the time of harvest, hence the hymn to Nama which says: "boli fyerela ka den' (the boli has flowered to bring forth fruit)." These ceremonies are accompanied by orgies [262] during which the celebrants, both men and women, are said to indulge in sexual licentiousness. It may be concluded from these two series of happenings that the rites seek by appropriate mimicry to encourage the fruitfulness of nature.

794 There are other indications which show that it is indeed 776 toward nature that the rites are directed. In certain brotherhoods, notably the Kore, the costumed officiants who farm the ● 825 cartege pretend to be wara-u (wild beasts), suruku-u (hyenas), golo-u (monkeys), and other terrifying inhabitants of the bush (1).

1. They are all called wara or sogo, terms used for all wild animals. It should be noted that every nyana is called wara (power, lord).

794 It is not rash to suppose that in this case they are symbolizing
776 the role, probably primordial and in any event primary, of
825 the nyana to control the supernatural and particularly malevolent forces of the bush. As a matter of fact, the most popular and important nyana are the protectors of the harvests which represent virtually the only property of the natives. One of the nyana is even especially concerned with agricultural work (2);

[461]

2. In the native vocabulary, "to work" (tya-ke, short for tyi-ya-ke) primarily means "to work in the fields."

this is Tyi-wara (god of agricultural work), who presides over the first clearing of the land at the beginning of the winter season.

In any case, whether the animal is regarded as the visible form of a spirit or, if one prefers, the perceptible manifestation of a supernatural force, the belief is strengthened by the common practice of the interdict (tne) and, still more, by the magical acts required of a hunter.

Another aspect of this belief is seen in the choice of an animal to represent the mount of the nyana dugu-da-siri.

794 It is for a similar reason that the brotherhoods usually
825 adopt the name of an animal: for the Nama this is usually the hyena (suruku) (3); for the Komo, the hyena (suruku) or the

[552]

3. The hyena is often designated by the words nama-koro (old Nama) or suya-koro (old sorcerer) when the speaker does not want to use the animal's real name (suruku). There is a whole vocabulary for use to "avoid" the names that are dangerous to utter, and the name of the hyena is one of them.

elephant (sama); for the Dyara, the lion; for the Kono, the ostrich (kono-ba), etc. It is said that the cries, the shouts, and

794 The sounds of the [263] trumpets to announce the meetings
● 825 imitate the cry of the animal (1).

[534]

1. This is true of the Dyara. In the brotherhood of that name, a cry like a roar is drawn from an instrument made as follows: the hollow trunk of a palm tree is covered at one end by a tightly stretched skin; a long thong or rope runs down inside the trunk from the center of the skin; the operator pulls the rope tight, then lets it slip through his hand by jerks, and having achieved a certain facility, he succeeds in producing a noise like a roar.

000 Can it be that the costumes made of bark strips, the strange masks, and the mimicry of the people who wear them are connected with mysteries which are now unknown to us, either because they have been adopted without understanding and thus deformed beyond recognition, or because they are the last vestiges of far older cults, today unfathomable since they no longer exist?

Did Egypt inspire these cults, as some people believe? Or rather was Egypt herself influenced originally by a pre-existent Black civilization whose last surviving traces she kept alive by altering them? This is an unlimited field for speculation.

794 Generally speaking, the cult is in abeyance on Monday
805 and Thursday of each week. The same days are holidays from communal work and are left to the "poor people" for their own profit. There must be some connection between these two facts, and it should further be noted that, as a result, the religious week is reduced to five days. A question naturally arises, therefore, as to whether the week as now observed is truly native. It seems likely that the week is an oriental contribution, more specifically Islamic. It could be a coincidence that Islam organized slavery, and when a seven-day week was adopted, two days were allotted to the gens de poëste, as used to be said IN FRANCE,

794 still -- aside from the fact that this would not appreciably alter the broad lines already indicated -- the present state of our knowledge makes it possible to describe in detail only a few great brotherhoods which are widespread among [270] the Bambara with whom we are here concerned; these are based on cults of Komo, Nama, Kore, and Nya.

The Komo

794 173 The Komo is held in particularly high esteem in the Ségou area. According to the accepted legend, the Komo was brought from Mandé country, where it is supposed to have been introduced by El Hadj Moussa. El Hadj Moussa, having failed to obtain pardon for his sins during a visit to Mecca, turned to the study of magic. He obtained the Komo in exchange for a miraculous shirt (dloki) which some sorcerers had woven for him and which had the faculty of growing longer or shorter at the pleasure of its owner (1).

1. Another example of miraculous cloth, in that case a gift of the marabouts of Djenné, is referred to in the chronicle of Ségou in connection with the installation of Bakari, son of Biton (p.).

El Hadj Moussa is also supposed to have brought a no less miraculous canoe from Mecca, which is still preserved in the greatest secrecy in a swamp in the vicinity of Kouri, near Naréna, in Mandé country.

Finally, he brought back many boli. As he was coming up the Niger, some of them fell into the river and were transformed; the n-tigi (silurids or torpedo fish) is thought to be the result of such a transformation. [825]

According to another legend, the Komo was brought from the Orient, not by El Hadj Moussa but by Fa Koli Sissokho, a follower of El Hadj Moussa.

Whatever may be the truth of the matter, the Bambara are convinced that the Komo was brought to Ségou from Mandé

181 the kingdoms from each other; for him a mineral is not a vegetable
811 nor a vegetable an animal. He differentiates between the animate
772 and the inanimate and does not confuse the genera and species. But has he known how to establish a definite, clear, and well-demarcated line of distinction between man and the rest of creation? No, he bases his ideas of all things on himself or, to be more definite, on what he feels and believes himself to be. In addition to genii and spirits, he sees conscious forces and energies everywhere in nature. He cannot define these forces; his ideas on the subject are confused and indefinite. But, nevertheless, it is true, that he attributes a glimmer of reason and feeling to everything. Obviously the black man does not attribute a soul -- in the sense that we understand it -- to everything; nor does he say that everything is the home of a genie or a spirit; yet he cannot conceive of pure matter. He finds instinct in animals and special virtues and properties in plants. In inert matter he encounters phenomena which he cannot explain, and since he always uses himself and his reasoning as the basis of comparisons, he endows everything with the immaterial, invisible, imperceptible attributes of reason and feeling. In his mind I repeat, matter is not a soul, or a genie as he conceives of one; yet it is a being, a force, a power that has its own existence and the ability to act of its own accord. Here are a few examples taken from a thousand:

811 In July, 1908 at the time when the crops were sprouting, cer-
731 tain regions of the Ségou circle were invaded by tiny caterpillars
782 measuring barely 0.025 meters in length. They were a beautiful
●825 velvety black with pale green lines on their sides; they came from the east out of no one knows where and myriads of them proceeded toward the west in serried ranks. Wherever they passed everything was eaten, and the eleusine /African millet/, corn, and sorghum had to be resown.

While these creatures were devouring the crops, the Moslem cried his insignificant formula toward the east and repeated, "God is great." He prostrated himself, crouched on his heels, devoutly shaking his forefinger, but all was in vain, for the quivering black wave continued to draw back on itself, to hump its back, and then to grow longer /14/; it continued to advance and to grow. The pagan

whitened the front of his dwelling with a mixture of millet flour and water that had been offered to the shades of his ancestors, and poured chicken blood here and there; then he thought it best to meet in council and consult his sorcerers. The same orders were given everywhere: a potentate, perhaps a prince, doubtless of the caterpillar people, was celebrating his wedding and respects must be paid to him. All the pagan villages did so, and the marriage of the caterpillars took place one fine morning at daybreak. Two or three caterpillars were placed at the bottom of old worn-out gourds and carried far up a path on the west side and out of the village by a procession of women and girls, singing and dancing, and preceded by furiously beating drums. They placed the little creatures on a spot determined by the elders and, after a wild dance they made their farewells, foolish farewells, stupid perhaps and yet nevertheless touching. For if the young people called to them with a long burst of laughter: "I na somaon fo (you will greet your people)," and some old shrews in a tone of command cried: "Ta so! (Go home!)," there were more who said to them: "Toumouni (little caterpillar), an bi déli (we implore you) have pity on us, go back now to your kingdoms; everything is eaten, and there is nothing left. Go, bring greetings to the people of your family, greet them all and greet them well."

They continued to come through for at least eight days, but their number decreased and a storm came and swept them away. Every Bambara will tell you that these caterpillars do not talk, that they have no soul. And yet if you try to make him understand that he has rendered them futile, useless, childish honors and that they could neither enjoy his music and songs nor understand his prayers and supplications, he will shrug his shoulders: "Tigné o (you are right)," he will tell you with a mocking air, and cutting your talk short will add: "Ou tara!", and one who knows the Bambara will guess the full implication: "Nevertheless, they left."

In August, 1908 a large part of the population of the villages located in the environs of Ségou spent the day of Friday the twenty-eighth in sweet idleness. Since I knew that a Kono fetish brought by its masters to recruit initiates was going from village /15/ to

825 village, I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraor-
784 dinary during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the
pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their hus-
[262] bands and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey
water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said
-- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumb-
ness, its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people
of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the cater-
pillars would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it
remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat
themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

482 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
757 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
784 has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this
silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which
would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the
way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant
that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
753 curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
784 person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the
latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up
his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures
our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would pro-
vide this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is
another force or power. He sets the second power against the first
to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate
and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence
of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

2. Taboos

614 The Bambara people are divided into several families or lineages
● 825 each of which bears a special name, or diamou, and sees at its head
784/16/ certain plants or animals as protectors and patrons. The Djara lineage claims kinship with the lion, the kana, or iguana (1), the

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1. A kind of large lizard resembling a small alligator. It lives on river banks and near ponds, and though it prefers the land and climbs trees, it likes to play in the water. The French commonly call it gueule tapée /"smart jaw"/.

boumou, or dondol; the Dambélé with a large black monkey called Ngoba; the Tankara with a spiney silk-cotton tree, the dondol; the Kouloubali with the wild pig /biche cochon?/, the Mpolio (2), and

2. A slimy and spined fish.

the panther. There is not a lineage that does not have one or even several tné, or taboos. As will be seen below, lineages of the same name often regard themselves as bound by a tie of fraternity and friendship, while a difference in the tné shows, that a division occurred at some particular time.

Europeans, churchmen, military men, and civilians, usually call the Bambara tné "totems." Since Long, the one to speak first of "totemism" and "totems," this question has been treated at length by serious and distinguished authors, by competent authorities. Their definitions cannot be applied to the Bambara tné. Striking as is the resemblance of some of them to the totems of the Redskins and the Australians, I cannot apply to them the definition given by Nicolay in speaking of the Redskins: "The Redskins also believe in the existence of spirits peculiar to individuals (as fetishes are to Africans) and which, in animal form, bear the names of totems." (3) The

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3. /Fernand/ Nicolay, /Curiosités des lois et coutumes./ Histoire des croyances, /superstitions, / moeurs, /usages et/ coutumes /(selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. The History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Ways, and Customs (according to the outline of the Decalogue)/, / Vol. 1, Book 1, Chap. 1. /Paris, 1901.?

Bambara mé are completely different from fetishes and have nothing in common with the latter. In a chapter (1901, p. 61) of his work, "myths, cultes et religions /Myths, Cults, and Religions/, A. Lang defines totemism for us thus:" The word "totemism" or "totamism" was applied for the first time by Long... to the customs of the Indians.. which acknowledges kinship with animals.... Totemists spare animals which are of their flesh and blood...." According to A. Lang, the Redskins and Australians believe themselves to be truly and physically related to the animal-totem, and they number among their grandparents /17/ a doe, a toad, an ant, a rabbit, etc. All actual physical kinship is of course communicated by means of blood, and two beings who have in their veins the blood of the same individual are related. In order to be of the same flesh and blood as their totems, the Redskins and Australians thus believe themselves to be actual sons of an ancestor who formerly was a doe, toad, ant, rabbit.... In Chapter II of his work Histoire des croyances, moeurs et coutumes, Nicolay gives one to understand that the Redskins believe that at the moment of death the spirit of their ancestor found shelter in the body of the animal which serves as totem; is it possible that Lang, who is silent on this point, is unaware of Indian beliefs in metamorphosis and metempsychosis? He does not report the fact anywhere in his work Myths, cultes et religions, but whatever hypothesis one may make on this point, the fact remains that according to him Indian beliefs imply a real physical kinship. If one assumes that the first ancestors of the Indian were changed or metamorphosed at some

614 given moment into a doe, toad, ant, or rabbit -- a singular evolution
825 if ever there was one, one may suppose that at the moment of the
784 metamorphosis these animals did not exist and they are all, men and animals, of the same flesh and the same blood; or, more plausibly, the ancestors changed themselves into already existing animals, procreating among them does, toads, ants, or rabbits as they had formerly reproduced human beings, so that in killing one of these totem animals a Redskin must always be afraid that he is killing a son or grandson of the ancestor, or some other of the latter's descendants, and therefore of his own flesh and blood (1).

1. /sic/ A. Lang does not seem to doubt that the people of whom he speaks -- Redskins, Tahitians, and Africans -- give a very broad meaning to the words "father," "mother," "brother," "wife," "son," and that they customarily use them to refer to persons with whom they have no bond of kinship.

[578] There is nothing like this for a Bambara. To call someone a wild animal is in his eyes an insult, and to call a man the son of a dog (oulou den) is enough to make him angry, to throw him into a fit of anger; even if he has a dog for a mé, that is a wrong which will sooner or later be avenged. He does not number among his ancestors a dog, or a panther, a lion or a snake. A Kouloubali would be much surprised to learn that a doe gave birth to him, and there is not a Tankara who thinks he has /18/ the sap of the dondol or the juice of its fruit in his veins. When a Djara calls himself the son of a lion, or a Dambélé the son of a big black monkey, what they say must be understood in a very broad sense, as an analogy. We ourselves say of a special benefactor: "He is my father," "he is my mother," "he is my all."

171 Here the Bambara is akin to the Christian Quichés of Guatemala
614 of whom D. G. Brinton speaks in his "Nagualism," 1294, -- O. Stoll
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in his Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala /The Ethnology of the Indian Tribes of Guatemala/, Leyden, 1882. This work is cited by Lang in Chap. III of Mythes, cultes et religions. His tné is a friend, a protector, and may be defined as follows: it is an animate or inanimate being entitled to the respect and veneration of an entire lineage, family, or clan, in recognition of an outstanding service which has prevented the lineage, family, or clan from disappearing or becoming extinct, or has preserved them from a misfortune.

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Every tne has its legend. Although in the mouth of the black man the tale may be embellished and decorated a little so that it varies somewhat, the substance remains the same. I will translate a few of these legends, preserving both their form and their substance.

Legend of the Two Kouloubali

The people were at war; everywhere there were only fugitives. The Kouloubali lineage had been cruelly stricken and reduced to two members, two brothers lost in the bush with their wives and children. The elder who followed /sic/ his brother at a distance, (since for fear of being surprised, they avoided camping in the same place). He arrived at the bank of a swollen river and saw he could not cross, there being no boats. "Where can I flee now?" he lamented. "I am in the hands of my enemies! For me and my family it is death or slavery." A mpolio was passing by; it heard, was touched by compassion, and, raising its big, bearded head out of the water, called to him: "I can take you over, have no fear!" The elder of the Kouloubali and his family, with their weapons and baggage, settled themselves on the slimy back of the strange fish and crossed the river. Then he said to the fish: "Listen, good mpolio, my brother and his family are over there on the bank. Do not render them the /19/ service that you rendered me, for he is an ingrate, one without a heart, and he might kill you." -- "Kill me? Come now!" and the fish dove, disappeared, and emerged far over near the other bank, at the moment when the young Kouloubali was wondering how his older brother had been able to cross such a wide

773 and deep river when there were no boats. "It is thanks to me," said
614 the mpolio, "place yourself on my spine as he did." And so the
539 younger brother and his wives crossed the river.
784 The young Kouloubali was heartless. When the women had put
825 down their gourds and baskets on the bank, at the moment when the mpolio leaped up and raised the full height of its body out of the water in order to dive and disappear, he threw his spear at it. The fish struggled for an instant, the water foamed, reddened, and then there was quiet: it was dead.

The family of the young Kouloubali cut up the animal and, without shame or remorse, invited the family of the elder brother to come to the feast. "Eat the mpolio," cried the latter, "never! And may there be a curse on any of mine that dares to eat it." Since that day, the mpolio has been the tné of the descendants of the elder Kouloubali.

To some extent it is also the tné of the descendants of the younger brother, but they eat it except for the head.

Legend of a Branch of the Taraoulé

A woman saw all her children die, and so she trembled for her last born, a sickly, puny little boy whom her milk did not help. One day she was alone in her hut crouched on her mat with the child on her knees, spinning cotton when she began to cry and moan: "You will not live, you will join your elder brothers, you will go away and leave me alone." A spitting snake was passing by; he came in and gently coiled himself around the body of the child. The mother let out a cry, and the neighbors came running.... The snake slowly uncoiled and left the dwelling while the child held his arms out to it and smiled. He did not die but became strong and healthy, for the snake had drunk all the gnâma, all elements of illness that were in him. From that day on the Taraoulé branch of which this child is the father does not eat the spitting snake, or n'gorono, for the curse of the ancestor would descend on them: that is, the spitting snake is their tné. /20/

Legend of Another Taraoulé Branch

A woman was fetching wood in the forest when she was seized with the pains of childbirth. "All alone, what will become of me?" she cried. "I have no one to help me; who will wash my child? Oh! I will take a corpse home with me." She knelt by her load of wood, gave birth to her child, collapsed, and lost consciousness. A big black monkey was munching fruit in a near-by tree; it saw her and was moved.... It played midwife, washed the little creature, rocked him in its arms, and when the mother came to herself it gave her back her little boy. From that day on no descendant of this Taraoulé branch eats ngoba; this big black monkey is their tné, and the ancestor would curse anyone who did so.

Legend of the Two Djara

Two Djara brothers with wives and children were fleeing before their enemies. Overcome with fatigue they sat down in the shade of a dondol determined to go no farther. Actually, they were so plagued by thirst that they could not go on. An iguana was wandering in the vicinity; it had pity on the two Djara, so it climbed the dondol and, working with its tail and feet, succeeded in producing a gentle dew under the tree. All were able to quench their thirst with the sap held in the calyxes of this tree's blossoms. "The kana (iguana) shall from now on be my tné," said the elder, "and I curse any one of my descendants who kills or eats it." -- "Think it over," said the younger, "is it not to the dondol that we owe our lives? Is it not its sap that quenched our thirst? Would it not be better to take this tree as tné?" The two Djara argued, could never agree, and separated. The kana became the tné of the older branch, and the boumou, or dondol, that of the younger branch.

Legend of the Samaké

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My grandfather has often told it to me; he himself got it from his ancestors.... A Samaké -- I cannot tell whether he had been fording the river or driving the stakes to which fishing mats are fastened -- was seized by an alligator which dragged him to the depths of its den. The alligator did not kill him, /21/ for it had fed.... Leaving the unhappy man to his sad thoughts, it withdrew.... It did not go away, however, and from time to time it hit the water with its tail at the entrance of the hole, making it quite clear that there was only one way out and that this was the door. Stretched out in the ooze, the unhappy Samaké moaned: "Who will save me from those terrible claws and those powerful teeth?" An ant lion at the top of the den was watching for flies and ants in the bottom of its pit; it had pity on the man and, working with its two horns, succeeded in bringing in a ray of sunlight to revive the hopes of the Samaké. "Will I be saved?" he asked the ant lion. Two pinches of sand were the answer, and he understood. Working with both hands, he helped the ant lion; the hole grew and he was able to get through. He escaped. When the alligator re-entered its den, exhausted with hunger, it was disappointed not to find its prey there. So as not to invite the curse of their ancestor, the descendants of this Samaké respect and venerate the géré, or ant lion, and it is their tné. Other Samaké have the elephant (sama) for their tné.

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These few legends are sufficient; they all show us that although the Bambara believes that the bond with the tné is simply one of fraternity, friendship, and gratitude and not a bond of real and physical kinship, he nonetheless does not fail to attribute reason and emotion to everything around him, to animals and to plants. In nature he does not find pure matter; rather he attributes human feelings in some degree to everything, and throughout he sees a force, a power, an intangible, which he does not know how to define and which thinks, loves, laments, and weeps.

789 Animals also have gnâma, and the gnâma of birds are among
778 those most feared. By preference, they attack little children, who
825 die in convulsions as a result; it is impossible to mistake the cause
753 of their illness and death, since the hands and feet of the child curl up like a bird's claws. Birds are thought to be especially wicked in winter time, undoubtedly because they nest, find plenty of food, and
[751] are big, fat, and vigorous. During that season mothers tie around the necks of nursing infants a string that has nine knots in it, which places them under the protection of their gnâma. Birds keep their gnâma even when dead, and I remember that in November or December, 1907, all the village of Songhobougou attributed a small influenza epidemic to the death of a big black bird (the djougo), which a European killed in one of their fields. "We have pains in our kidneys, we have pains in our throats, and we cough," they said dismally, "and the hunter is to blame for it all. Toubabou ko té vva? A ye djougo do fa en ka forola, djougo gnâma do.... It is the European's fault, he killed a djougo in our fields and we are weighed down with gnâma." /29/

Chapter 2

Animism and Its Consequences

1. The Beliefs about Spirits

776 The Bambara has not deified the forces of nature. Although in some instances he shows them respect and fears them, he leaves them without priest, /sacrificial/ victim, or altar: he is not a "nature worshipper" in the strict sense of the word; his true religion is animism. His spiritualism knows no bounds and he sees genii just about everywhere. The bush is full of these spirits; they lodge in the trees or lounge astride branches; they run around the outskirts of villages; splash in ponds and wells; they pull themselves onto high rocks,

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and metamorphoses. Although I have no precise data, this coincidence leads me to think that the same is true of cannibals of the Ubangi.

782 To be convinced one need only be present at the sacrifices; no matter whether the offering is to the djiné genii, the boli genii, or to the shades of ancestors, there recurs, always, the phrase: "Deliver us from the souba and the gné-fla." One of the chief functions of the boli fetishes is just this, and there are some whose special and primary role is to make war against the Siri genii. One of these fetishes is the Nama, a powerful boli which is greatly honored, venerated, and, I should say, fashionable in the Ségou circle and among all Mande peoples. The Ngouansa, known especially in the Worodougou, is also said to specialize in this sphere. From time to time it makes its appearance in the Ségou circle, and its owner without fail does his bit of business and fills his purse. People run to him from all sides bringing hens, goats, and kola nuts, and I have seen these Ngouansa tigi, or masters of a Ngouansa, red with blood after spending the entire morning sacrificing. Before cutting their victims' throats, they stand, facing east with arms akimbo, and shout at the tops of their voices: "Souba, you are dogs, you are even less, the excrements of dogs, oubou bo."

191 Would the name of the souba and the gné-fla be heard so often
● 825 from the lips of the Negroes, would families, villages, and sects /41/
824 spill so much blood or offer so many kola nuts, if they did not sincerely believe in them? Not only do they find an irrefutable proof of the possibility of metamorphosis in the fact that the caterpillar turns into a chrysalis which becomes a butterfly, they will also tell you that the winged termite, "that short-lived creature which on winter evenings comes in swarms around the lights, scattering wings everywhere, in the soup and on the plates," buries itself in the ground, swells like a sorghum seed, grows roots, and becomes a graceful shrub and then a beautiful tree provided it is spared by fire. I do not know the scientific name of this shrub or tree, but the Negroes call it sandéré.

776 What is the meaning of the word sa? Could it be the original
196 name of the Divinity? Since certain Bantu tribes have a high regard for snakes and dedicate a cult to them, some Europeans have wanted to see in it a translation of the word "snake." That is a great and fundamental error. The word sa, "snake," and the word sa in the sentences sa bi fign, sa bi na, etc., may have the same spelling, but
[194] the pronunciation is different. The hard "s" of sa, "snake," is pronounced by opening the teeth slightly and protruding the lips, and the word sa in sa bi fign, etc., is pronounced by closing the teeth and pulling in the lips. Thus, these are two quite distinct words. Moreover, to claim the snake is, or has been, the Bambara divinity seems to me a piece of stupidity. If they do not claim any bond of real or physical kinship even with the animals that are their taboo, one must believe a fortiori that they would not claim /77/ an animal, even a snake, as Creator and sovereign Lord. Some Bambara have it as a family taboo, and a branch of the Mande people have such great respect for the python Minia (1) that now they are known only by the

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1. The Baganda of Uganda before they became Christian venerated the snake as the dwelling place of a demon. Their snake has a great resemblance to the animals that are family taboos for the Bambara, or better still, to the python Minia, taboo of the Mande branch commonly known under the name of Minia-n-ka. Since the Minia-n-ka derive their name from the word Minia, name of the snake that is venerated and an object of public worship, some have insisted that the Bambara or Bamana derive their name from the word Bama, meaning "cayman" /a species of alligator/. If the cayman, Bama in

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the Bambara language, had given its name to the people, this animal would be taboo for them, as the Minia is taboo for the Minianka, and the Mani or Mali, the hippopotamus, is taboo for the Malinke. None of this is true of the cayman in Bambara country; it is in no way the taboo of the tribe. Moreover, the word Bamana could just as well come from the word bama, a kind of tench /a fresh-water fish of the carp family/ which is found in abundance in the Bani and the Niger. This idea has not occurred to the partisans of the cayman, who undoubtedly are not familiar with the fish called bama. The word Bambara comes from the word bamba which means "rebel" and, in the mouths of the Moslems, carries the meaning of Kafri. Bambara means "the rebel who has never submitted to Islam," and the Negroes of the west speak of Bamako or Bambako, "the river of the rebels." Father Copte, a student of the Bambara recognized by the Negroes of the Ségou, quickly understood this fact and noted it in his accounts in the Annals of the White Fathers. Mr. De Lafosse, an administrator most conversant with the native laws, customs, and ways, recognized it also, and I share their opinion concerning the name Bambara.

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name of Minia-n-ka, the people of the Minia snake. But have the Minianka ever worshipped, or do they still worship, the snake as their

776 day by the soli (those who are to be excised). It is a kind of semolina
782 (very fine couscous called basi) which is eaten with an /88/ extremely
304 spicy sauce of smoked fish. It is called basi k'li because, in order to
262 provide this repast, the little girls are obliged to run from door to door, clapping their hands, singing and begging (k'li).

776 Among the invisible wanderers, there is one which is strongly reminiscent of our "werewolf." It is the souroukou, an imaginary
825 hyena, whose supposed existence has brought about a strange practice.
514 Every evening one sees groups of little boys and groups of little girls, turning aside a little into the bush: they all go in a band to take their last precautions and attend to the wants of nature -- union is strength even against the gnéna.

776 Many other gnéna are among this group that roams the village; they flutter in the b'lon, or entrance huts, they live in horrible filth, hung over doors, on the walls, and on the posts that support the terrace roofs, and the only hangings to be seen anywhere are eggshells, heads of millet, fruit pits, and seeds from the bush, which are offered to these friends as saraka. Nor are private huts without them, for the gnéna roll in the ashes of the hearth, snore on the mats, and take the air in the conari (1); there are some everywhere.

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1. The conari is a baked earth receptacle used for water, beer, and cooking food.

Finally, there are gnéna or djiné who are powerful. Without mercy for their enemies, whom they abandon to all kinds of sorcery and evil spells, they are full of both attention and consideration for their friends. They can cause sickness, poverty, and other calamities to descend on a family, a village, or a whole region; but they can also side with them against a visible or invisible enemy; they can protect them, exorcise anything, and grant real blessings to each and all. The characteristic trait of the gnéna, in fact, is not that they can refrain from doing harm, but that they can also do good directly by performing a good act. Some choose to live in a rock, others prefer a knoll or a large tree near the village, and there are those who

776 risk of spoiling the crop -- o be gno soun tigné ("it destroys the vitality
241 of the seed of the millet grain").
782 These genii do not have special festivals in the course of the year. Their priests, the heads of families, offer them saraka and sacrifices at planting time, and some of them sacrifice a hen in the corner of the field while the crop is sprouting and growing, but that is all.

6. Genii Protectors of Children

89 It is not until circumcision that Bambara children take part in
794 the mysteries of pagan worship, but they are early prepared for it so
776 that they may be introduced to the law of secrecy which they must strictly adhere to later when they are initiates of an occult sect. At about the age of seven or eight years, they become affiliated with an association worshipping the genii responsible for protecting them. All these sects are alike, differing only in name. On the banks of the
[525] Bani and the Niger, the object of worship is the tauri (toad or frog), and the croaking of this animal is imitated in their festivals; some villages have the djara (lion) and imitate its roar by whirling their
[534] slingshots, small boards four fingers wide and one to two centimeters long, attached to the end of a string. The most widespread /children's
[824] genie/ is n'tomo, which undoubtedly gets its name from the tree in which it lives (the /92/ jujube tree, n'tomo). It makes children hale and hearty, preserves them from sickness, defends them against the invisible little creatures of the bush, against spells and sorcery, and makes them strong, steadfast, and impervious to suffering.

The confraternity of the n'tomo is modeled after that of the boli. (This is true of both kinds -- for there are two; a white costume is worn to the dance for n'tomo djé and a black costume for n'tomo fign). In order to be admitted one must offer a hen to the child who is head of the n'tomo (the n'tomotigi), prostrate oneself before the tree of the genie, and swear to keep the secret and never to speak of the n'tomo to the uninitiated, especially not to little girls.

845 778 431 If one of the twins dies early in life, as usually happens, the survivor receives a statuette which he keeps all his life with jealous care and to which he gives the name of the deceased. He dresses it to the best of his ability, often covers it with glass trinkets, such as bangles, beads, bits of amber, rings, etc., and well-bred people never give him a gift without adding at least 5 cowrie shells for the statuette.

845 778 825 The sinsin also grants twins a curious privilege. A scorpion not only cannot bite them, it is even at their service, and on their order will bite a fellow who has displeased them.

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A twins' doll.

845 551 It is easy to recognize twins (flani in Bambara) as they have special names, the commonest being Sinna, Maféné, Gno, and Ouassa. /99/

10. The Genie Protector of Villages

776 621 The genie protector of a village lives on a knoll or a rock; almost always, if not invariably, its home is a baobab or false cedar near the walls, in a little grove intersected by neat paths, well kept and often raked.

796 A great sacrifice to the spirit protector of the village, the
825 dasiri, is made every year. The spirit always has a mount such as
782 a snake, a rat, a lizard, a donkey, etc.; almost everywhere the mount is a terrible billy goat that roams through the village, enters everywhere, eats everything, and breaks everything without paying attention to the switch. For at least three days at the time of the sacrifice, the village makes merry; men, women, and children dance, stuff themselves with food, and drink and get drunk.

796 Just as everyone takes part in the feasting and drinking, so all
782 participate in the sacrifice, even the women, who at least go to the edge of the sacred grove, though they do not enter. And /101/ there is an abundance of everything: dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, d'lo, or millet beer, and finally meats. At least a goat, and sometimes a bull, is killed for the whole village, and the heads of families offer goats and hens, depending their wealth.

782 In addition to the sacrifices offered once a year and those offered
778 by a family when one of the children marries, the fetish receives
776 homage and tribute from just about everyone. Sterile women and those who habitually miscarry offer it many hens and fawn upon the animal that is its mount. If one gives birth to a baby, one consecrates it to the fetish, calling it dji-ri-ba ("great tree"), gnéna ma ké (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"; ké, "male"), or gnéna ma (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"). They even like to add the name of the village where the bountiful dasiri is found: Kolotomo gnéna ma (1), /102/

1. Kolotomo, the name of a village about 30 kilometers from Ségou; gnena, "genie"; ma, "man."

(man or daughter of the dasiri genie of Kolotomo). Actually, the name gnénama is given only to girls; for boys the word ké ("male") is added: gnénama-ké.

776 It is known through the mediation of sorcerers that a dasiri
778 sometimes leaves its sacred grove and its tree. This event is unusual;
782 the tree may fall from old age, but the sacrifices will be continued

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on the stump, the open hole, or on the sprout that comes out of the ground, grows, and replaces the tree.

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Every dasiri has a sacred mount which bears its name and, as I have already said, it seems to prefer a billy goat above all. The latter dies of old age, that is, unless the good of the community dictates otherwise; I saw one perish in the prime of life because of

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A dasiri fetish tree (of Songobougou).

its scandalous behavior; he was inordinately fond of the ewes of the village, which he mistook for goats, and this behavior was far too shameless for a sacred being.

843 but is lost after the first months -- something that is inexplicable to her. To avoid this misfortune she covers herself with grigris and talismans; she wears them on her neck, on her hips, down her breasts, on her arms. One in particular I cannot silently pass over; it is the tafo, a narrow leather thong held in the skin of a monkey's hand and knotted sometimes around the wrist and sometimes above the biceps.

842 843 782 778 A sterile woman or one subject to accidents during her pregnancies appeals to the Komo, Kono, or Nama boli fetishes, but more often to the gnena, or djine, fetishes, and above all to the dasiri fetish, the genie protector of the village. Through the intermediary of the priest, the gnena-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, she offers it hens, kola nuts, and dégé, or millet flour mixed with water. She dedicates and consecrates the fruit of her womb to the dasiri and swears an oath to offer a sacrifice worthy of it if she succeeds in carrying her child to full term.

842 843 782 778 825 I should reiterate in passing that the dasiri gnéna is not, as one might suppose, constantly sitting down or astride of a /167/ leafy branch or, if you like, enclosed in a tree trunk with bark as a fitted jacket. It walks around, readily leaves the tree, the spring, or the rock which it uses as dwelling, home, or resting place; it visits its relatives and close friends, it carouses with its companions every time a drinking bout is held in honor of one of them, and when there are no parties, it takes advantage of its freedom. It is afraid of walking with its feet on the ground, so for its romantic excursions in and around the village, it straddles its mount, which is a snake, a lizard, or a donkey, but usually, as we already know, a terrible billy goat. It is this animal, especially, that the sterile woman showers with her attentions; she often goes far into the bush to fetch a handful of tender grass which is its delicacy, and every day measures of millet and maize bran are set aside for it. When she becomes a mother, she overflows with sacrifices and acts of thanksgiving, and her child receives the name of the fetish. He will be djiriba, gnénama, or gnénamaké, as I have already said in the paragraph in which I discussed the dasiri, who is the genie protector of the village and the first of the gnéna.